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## ABE/LINK MALAWI TPDS MONTHLY BULLETIN

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### LITERACY FORUM SHARES BEST PRACTICE IN MALAWI



The improvement of Early Grade Literacy is one of the main objectives of TPDS. To kick our work off in this field, we organized 'The Best Practices Literacy Forum' at Lilongwe Hotel on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> July. The purpose of the event was to share experiences from primary level literacy interventions past and present from all around the country and identify best practices. It presented an opportunity for over 40 professionals in the field to learn from each other and strengthen implementation of the Primary Curriculum Assessment Reform. Participants included representatives the MoEST, the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), a range of NGOs who are active in the field, as well as teachers, Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), and District Education Managers (DEMs): The event was opened by the Guest of Honor Mr. Raphael Agabu, Acting Director of Education Methods Advisory Service, (EMAS) who challenged participants to find home-grown strategies to make a measureable improvement in literacy performance in Malawi. The following presentations were made

- Introductions and Expectations: Mr. Charles Gunsaru, MTPDS
- Introduction of MTPDS: Dr. Stephen Harvey, MTPDS
- PCAR Approach to Literacy: Henry Chilora MIE
- PSSP Best Practices: Dr. Grace Chiuwe, CERT
- Tikwere Best Practices: Patricia Luhana, Tikwere
- LAC and MBTL Best Practices: Ms. Rumphi Mangotchi and Mr. Henri Chilora, MIE
- CBE Best Practices: Mr. Ken Longden, GTZ
- Introduction of Read Malawi: Mr. Henry Chilora MIE
- Introduction of Early Grade Reading Assessment: Dr. Joe DeStefano, MTPDS

# MTPDS Monthly Bulletin July 2010



The presentations stimulated lively debate. Teachers, PEAs and other practitioners provided valuable perspectives grounded in classroom experience. Participants also displayed materials that each intervention or organization has generated, such as teachers' manuals, children's story books, TALULAR guides and materials, DVDs. On day 2, after a report on a recent field study undertaken by Dr. Absolom Phiri of MTPDS, participants broke into working groups to develop proposals and recommendations under the

following headings: teacher professional development, primary curriculum, learning materials, teaching methodology, and community involvement. These recommendations, combined with other recent research undertaken by TPDS will be combined and disseminated in the forthcoming TPDS technical report entitled 'Analysis of Best Practice in Literacy in Malawi'. TPDS will strive to carry forward these recommendations as the program develops and implements its literacy strategy.

## **MEETING WITH EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGERS PAVES THE WAY FOR ESTABLISHING DIVISIONAL OFFICES**

As TPDS starts to implement its programs it will also be necessary for staff to be stationed nationwide in order to deliver services and to monitor and evaluate the program. For this reason, it is anticipated that at least one program team member will be placed in each of the country's six education divisions. In order to maximize collaboration with existing MoEST structures and to build the capacity of those structures, it is highly desirable that these staff be stationed within divisional offices and that they work very closely with MoEST staff at divisional level. A meeting was held on 21<sup>st</sup> July at Lilongwe Hotel which was attended by all six Education Division Managers (EDMs) and all TPDS staff.

- SWED (South West): Sister Dambo
- SHED (Shire Highlands): Mrs Manda
- SEED (South East): Mr. Alufandika
- CEED (Central East): Mr. Nthengwe
- CWED (Central West): Ms T. Banda
- NED (Northern Ed. Division): Ms. Thawe

TPDS staff presented an overview of intended activities in each of the six result areas and EDMs had the opportunity to provide their input. Discussions focused upon the practicalities of providing adequate field support for CPD, ODL and other teacher training and support activities. EDMs unanimously welcomed the project as an opportunity to develop the capacity of Divisional Offices to deliver services to districts, zones and schools. Each Division has offered to make office space available for TPDS staff within their own current premises.

During the month of August, TPDS staff will complete recruitment of the Teacher Training Coordinators to be placed in each division and will visit each division. Presentations will be

# MTPDS Monthly Bulletin July 2010

made to District Education Managers (DEMs) and Coordinating PEAs from every district in order that there is a clear understanding of program objectives in every district. The sustainability of program impact will be closely associated by the extent to which existing structures and utilized for program implementation and strengthened in the process.

## **TPDS TEAM FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY ARRIVAL OF POLICY SPECIALIST AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION SPECIALIST**

From the start of July the TPDS team was further strengthened by the arrival of two new key staff members. Charles Gunsaru will work as Education Policy Specialist and Nicholas Shawa will work as Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. Charles is a very well known educationist in Malawi, having until recently served as Director of the Malawi Institute of Education (05-09), and having previously served in the MoEST as Principal Secretary for Education (02-05), Director of Secondary and Higher Education (98-02), and National Coordinator of the Malawi Integrated in-service Teacher Education Programme (96-98). He holds an MA in education from the University of London and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the programme. Charles will lead TPDS's work in Result Area 1 'Strengthened Teacher Support, Policy and Management Systems'.

Nick, who joins as Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, has more than 20 years of experience in data management, project design, and capacity building. Mr. Shawa has worked as the M&E and Data Specialist for the Malawi Primary School Support Program; he oversaw all project M&E activities and data collection processes. For the Malawi Education Support Activity Malawi Project (MESA), he designed computer systems for data capturing, cleaning, verification, analysis and interpretation and trained researchers and government officials on data collection/assessing pupils, teacher and school management committees' performance in the impact districts. Nick is a Certified Computer Engineer and holds certificates in Computer Science and Geographic Information Systems from University of Malawi and Clark University. Nick will lead TPDS's work on the Monitoring and Evaluation of PCAR implementation and all associated teacher education interventions. Both Charles and Nick have wasted no time in getting down to the vitally important tasks that face the program.

3

## **MALAWI INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION ENDORSES OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

MoEST and MIE are committed to develop and sustain the Malawi's systems for providing decentralized Continuous Professional Development (CPD). TPDS's supports this effort. To this end, TPDS has been working closely with staff from both MoEST and MIE to develop and refine documented operational guidance on how to deliver and implement CPD and effective supervision linked to PCAR implementation. After extensive consultations, MIE has endorsed a draft document entitled 'CPD Operation and Guidance: An Implementation Plan'. This document will be the foundation upon which CPD will be implemented through TPDS. It includes practical guidance on matters such as:

- The guiding principles upon which all TPDS CPD activities will be based.

# MTPDS Monthly Bulletin July 2010

- The roles and responsibilities of key players at all levels of the system in the delivery of CPD. And strategies of maximizing the synergy between each key players work.
- How the content of CPD training will be prioritized and selected in a manner that reflects the true expressed needs of the teachers themselves.
- How the cascade of training will be kept as flat as possible in order to ensure that it remains 'undiluted' and true to its intended plan.
- How CPD materials are to be developed and disseminated.
- How CPD activities can be effectively monitored and evaluated.

Given the limited resources available in Malawi for CPD, the model endeavors to be both 'light' and 'effective'. The first CPD module to be delivered by the project will support the dissemination of the existing manual on 'School-Based CPD'.

## JOINT PLANNING UNDERTAKEN WITH MOEST COUNTERPARTS

TPDS is a partnership between USAID and the MoEST, the explicit aim of developing capacity at all levels of the education system. It is therefore important that the program works in close collaboration and communication with the MoEST. To facilitate this process TPDS has consulted with senior MoEST officials to identify 'MoEST Counterparts' who will serve as the point-persons for each of the 6 Result areas.

Result Area	Manager	MoEST counterparts
1. Strengthened Teacher Support, Policy and Management Systems	Mr. Charles Gunsaru	Mr. Chandiwira ,Mr. Nyirenda, Mr. P. Themu, Mrs C. Kutsaira , Mr. Chipanga
2. Enhanced Teacher Performance	Dr. A. Phiri Mr. M. Polepole	Mr. G. Jere, Mrs Namaona, Mrs. D. Matiti, Mr. Chipanga, Mrs. M. Phiri, Mr. B. Kamanga
Improved Early Grade Literacy and Numeracy	Mr. O Banda	Mrs. D. Matiti, Mr. G. Chiunda
Improved Early Grade Literacy and Numeracy for Out of School Children and Youth	Mr. M. Polepole	Mrs C. Kutsaira
Enhanced Quality of Teaching and Learning Materials	Mr. M. Polepole	Mrs. C. Mussa Mr. G. Chiunda
Improved Teacher Education-PCAR M&E Systems and Quality	Mr. N. Shaba	Mrs. Kafundu

These MoEST counterparts can:

- Provide advice and input in project planning processes ensuring that project activities remain well tuned to current MoEST priorities and policies;
- Participate in project monitoring and evaluation activities;
- Act as internal advocates for the project within the MoEST ensuring that accurate information is disseminated;
- And, through participation in project activities will benefit from the capacity building opportunities that they present.

The value of this role has been immediately demonstrated during July, which has been a period of intense planning activity in TPDS, in preparation for the submission of an operational plan covering the 18 month period starting 1<sup>st</sup> August. MoEST Counterparts have provided valuable input into the planning of activities in each result area.